

Georgia Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission

200 Piedmont Avenue | Suite 1402, West Tower | Atlanta, Georgia 30334
404-463-1980 | www.ethics.georgia.gov

Teleconference Meeting | Friday, June 17, 2011 | 9:00 AM

Location: 200 Piedmont Avenue, Suite 1402 – West Tower
Atlanta, GA 30334

Commission Meeting Minutes

PRESENT:

Commission Members:

Patrick Millsaps, Commission Chairman (via conference call)
Josh Belinfante Commission Vice Chairman
Hillary Stringfellow, Commission Member (via conference call)
Kevin Abernethy, Commission Member
Kent Alexander, Commission Member

Campaign Finance Commission Staff Present:

Stacey Kalberman, Executive Secretary
Sherilyn Streicker, Deputy Executive Secretary

Office of the Attorney General Staff Present:

Meron Dagnew, Assistant Attorney General

OPENING COMMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN:

- Vice Chairman Belinfante called the meeting to order at 9:25 AM.
- Chairman Millsaps explained that it is the practice of the Commission that the Vice Chairman preside over the meeting in the Chairman's "physical" absence.
- Vice Chairman Belinfante identified the following individuals on the conference line:
 - Chairman Millsaps
 - Commissioner Stringfellow
 - Jim Walls, Atlanta Unfiltered
 - Doug Chalmers, Political Law Group
 - Stefan Passantino, McKenna, Long & Aldridge

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EXECUTIVE SESSION: 9:26 AM to 10:25 AM

Vice Chairman Belinfante changed the order of the agenda and indicated that the Commission would entertain a motion to enter into executive session at this time to discuss personnel matters.

Motion to enter into executive session made by Kent Alexander.

Seconded by Kevin Abernethy

Carried 5-0

The Commission went into executive session at 9:26 AM

Motion to end executive session made by Kent Alexander.

Seconded by Kevin Abernethy

Carried 4-0

Note that Commissioner Stringfellow was attending the meeting via conference call from the airport. Her plane was called to board during executive session so she left the meeting at that time.

The Commission exited executive session at 10:25 AM

PERSONNEL AND BUDGET MATTERS:

Commissioner Alexander addressed those in attendance regarding personnel and budget matters by stating:

1. Any personnel matters discussed within the Commission are related to budget.
2. Any misunderstandings between the Commission and its Executive Secretary, Stacey Kalberman, have been cleared up during the executive session.
3. Everyone should understand that Stacey Kalberman and her staff has done and continues to do excellent work for which the Commission is grateful.
4. At the Commission's request, Stacey Kalberman has agreed to stay on during the transition as the Commission looks for someone new to direct the office and the Commission is grateful.

Stacey Kalberman, Executive Secretary, addressed those in attendance by stating she has the greatest respect for the Commission and the work it does. She is happy to and looks forward to working with the Commission during the transition of her position thereby helping the Commission continue its work which is in the public's interest.

Ms. Kalberman did concur with Commissioner Alexander's comment that she and the Commission have had a chance to discuss issues that have risen over the last week and have come to a mutual agreement on any misunderstandings.

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Chairman Millsaps addressed those in attendance by stating that with the Commission's budget tough decisions have to be faced. He relayed that both he and his wife run small business and one of the toughest decisions that have to be made in running a business is when budgetary decisions cause the loss of very good people; that is what he believes is happening now with the Commission. He went on to say that not only has Stacey Kalberman helped the Commission with that, she has also agreed to help the Commission with the transition.

Chairman Millsaps went on to comment that for 15 months, as Executive Director, Stacey Kalberman has done an impossible job in terms of the duties she is in charge of and the budget she has been given and she did an excellent job doing it. Also, the legal work received from her has been next to none. The Commission looks forward to working with her during this transition and from this point on looks to work toward the future and appreciates her willingness to help the Commission in that regard.

Commissioner Abernethy addressed those in attendance by stating that he seconds statements by Chairman Millsaps and Commissioner Alexander. He reemphasized the fact that Stacey Kalberman has done excellent work. The quality of her legal analysis and writing has been very good [emphasis added] and in turn made the Commission look good. The Commission is grateful that she is willing to stay on and assist it through this transition. The Commission appreciates her service and thanks her for all the good work she has done.

Vice Chairman Belinfante addressed those in attendance by stating that he echoes all that has been said by his fellow Commissioners. The quality of the Commission's work has improved significantly since Stacey Kalberman has been with it and he is appreciative. He told those present that he had joked with the General Assembly that the next time they change the Commission's name it should be to the 'How to Lose Friends and Influence People Commission' for this often seems like an impossible job and Stacey Kalberman has handled it tremendously well. He went on to say that Stacey Kalberman will be missed and thanked her for working with the Commission during the transition.

Commissioner Alexander expressed that he was hopeful for more robust funding down the road from the legislator.

BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Chairman Millsaps indicated that tough budget decisions have to be made. The two of the tough decisions the Commission must face for the next fiscal year are in terms of position and salaries.

Chairman Millsaps asked the Commission to entertain a motion that:

- 1. For the next physical year the Deputy Executive Director position be eliminated and adjust the budget to reflect such. If need be, that position be reserved for a staff attorney – prospectively.*
- 2. The salary budgeted for the Executive Director is to be reduced to a range that is a smaller percentage of the entire budget. No more than \$85,000 with the ability to make adjustments as needed.*

Seconded by Josh Belinfante

Vice Chairman Belinfante opened the floor for discussion of the motion by the Commission.

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Chairman Millsaps went on to point out that:

- These changes would free up \$40,000 to \$50,000 in the budget that the Commission will assign priorities to at a later date with Stacey Kalberman's help. Her input will be very valuable in terms of prioritizing that money.
- It [budgetary changes] does free up money for everything from investigations to training.
- The Commission will look at prioritizing that money in the future should the motion carry.

Commissioner Alexander addressed the Commission and Sherilyn Streicker, Deputy Executive Secretary, by thanking Ms. Streicker for her work with the Commission.

Vice Chairman Belinfante addressed the Commission by stating that there has been a motion and a second and called for a vote.

Motion carried 4-0

HANDLING OF INCREASED VOLUME OF INFORMATION REQUESTS DURING 7/1/11 PERSONAL FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE FILING PERIOD

The July 1, 2011 Personal Financial Disclosure filing period is nearing and the Commission staff will be receiving an increase in the number of phone calls regarding such than it has in the past during this filing period. The issue of how the Commission staff will handle the additional call volume was presented to the Commission by Reginald Boswell, Director of IT.

Vice Chairman Belinfante proposed that this issue is moot due to Stacey Kalberman agreeing to stay on through the transition period.

Vice Chairman Belinfante opened the floor to discussion/comment by the Commission

Chairman Millsaps expressed his appreciation of Reginald Boswell for bringing this issue before the Commission. He went on to say the Commission has good team players that look at the Commission as a very big picture, for Mr. Boswell is not a dedicated member of the Education Division but the Head of IT. Chairman Millsaps thanked Mr. Boswell again for identifying this issue, bringing it to the Commissions attention and thanked Stacey Kalberman for making it moot.

TRAINING ROOM:

Stacey Kalberman addressed the Commission and those present regarding the need for a dedicated Commission training space. Ms. Kalberman stated that:

- Training is one of the most important functions the Commission performs.
- The Commission teaches 3-4 classes a month and is continuously in the position for scrambling for space.
- The Commission would use its old computers to have hands-on filing classes.
- The training room would also double as a commission meeting room.

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- The money for the changes would come from funds still available in the Commission's current fiscal year budget. If the funds are not used they must be returned to the State.

Commissioner Millsaps asked Stacey Kalberman if it was a fair assumption that with more training there would be fewer late filers. Ms. Kalberman responded that that has always been the hope; training will assist filers in getting their submitted reports right. She reiterated that and training is one of the Commission's most important functions.

Commissioner Millsaps asked Stacey Kalberman that with fewer late filers would the Commission then spend less on certified mail? Ms. Kalberman responded "absolutely".

Commissioner Millsaps stated that ultimately this change would result in long term savings. Ms. Kalberman agreed.

Commissioner Millsaps questioned Stacey Kalberman, regarding training and getting the word out about the Commission's training, are there any other organizations whose cause might be common with ours who have offered to assist in the training and education of filers?

Stacey Kalberman responded that the Commission has reached out to many different organizations and often speak at conferences. The Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) and the Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) have been involved. Ms. Kalberman traveled with GMA this summer to smaller cities around Georgia to give presentations on filing Campaign Contribution Disclosure Reports and recent changes in the law. The Commission does work with and through these organizations to get information to provide training classes to their members. The Commission also still has training videos and information on its website.

Commissioner Alexander commented that the cost of certified mail is part of the budget constraints facing the Commission.

In response to Commissioner Alexander's comment, Stacey Kalberman gave the example that this is a non election year for the March 31st report and the Commission has already spent \$5,000 on certified mail that will be for approximately 500 mailings.

Chairman Millsaps stated that this appears to be a good investment. It would be a small investment now that will pay dividends long term.

***Motion to approve the plans/renovation and move forward with expenditure made by Chairman Millsaps.
Seconded by Kevin Abernethy
Carrier 4-0***

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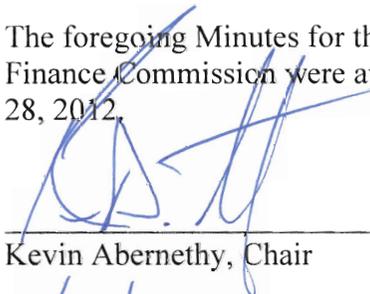
Vice Chairman Belinfante indicated that there were no other items on the agenda to be addressed.

*Motion to adjourn made by Chairman Millsaps.
Seconded by Kevin Abernethy
Carrier 4-0*

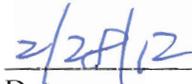
Meeting adjourned at 10:42 AM

Official Minutes Statement

The foregoing Minutes for the June 17, 2011 meeting of the Georgia Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission were approved and adopted by the Commission at the Commission's meeting on February 28, 2012.



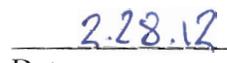
Kevin Abernethy, Chair



Date



Holly LaBerge, Executive Secretary



Date

County of Cobb,
State of Georgia

Affidavit of Presiding Officer

GEORGIA GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE COMMISSION

Personally appeared before the undersigned officer, duly authorized to administer oaths, Kevin Abernethy, Chair of the Georgia Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission, (the "Commission"), who, being sworn, states the following under oath:

1.

I am the Chair of the Commission. I am giving this Affidavit as required by O.C.G.A. § 50-14-4(b) to explain the closing to the public of a part of a meeting of the Commission. I have personal knowledge of the facts stated in this Affidavit.

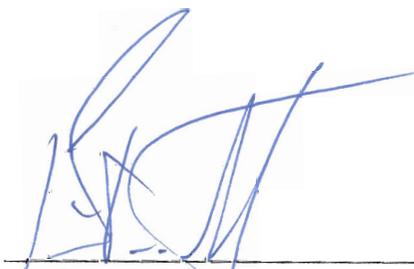
2.

On June 17, 2011, the Commission met in an open meeting at the Floyd Building in Atlanta where I was present and acting in the capacity of Commissioner. By a vote of 5 to 0, the Commission closed a portion of its meeting to the public in order to discuss and deliberate upon personnel matters. No other topic was discussed during the closed portion, over which I presided. The meeting was closed in accord with the specific exception to open meetings under O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(6) ("Meetings when discussing or deliberating upon the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of a public officer or employee ...").

Sworn to and subscribed before me this
28th Day of February, 2012.



Lisa M. Dentler, Notary Public
My Commission expires April 8, 2014



Kevin Abernethy, Chair
Georgia Government Transparency and
Campaign Finance Commission